



# CAREER FORWARD GEORGIA

A PLAN FOR ADVANCING CAREER,  
TECHNICAL, AND AGRICULTURAL  
EDUCATION IN GEORGIA

**FY2024 – FY2028**  
September 2023



Georgia Department of Education

Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent  
"Educating Georgia's Future"

Project support, plan facilitation, strategic guidance, and plan development by Greg Wilson, Rebecca Hunt, Kira Crowe, Madelyn Cantu, and David Tanner of the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Editing by Karen DeVivo and design by Jake Brower.

# CAREER FORWARD GEORGIA

A PLAN FOR ADVANCING CAREER, TECHNICAL, AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN GEORGIA

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4** Overview
- 4** Process
- 5** Mission, Vision, and Values
- 6** Priority 1  
Prioritize Skill and Industry Alignment  
at the State and Local Level
- 8** Priority 2  
Ensure High-Quality Career Development  
Support for All CTAE Students
- 10** Priority 3  
Enhance Recruitment and Retention Efforts  
for the CTAE Workforce
- 12** Priority 4  
Expand Marketing and Promotion Efforts to  
Enhance Stakeholders' Awareness and  
Perceptions of CTAE in Georgia



Georgia Department of Education

Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent  
"Educating Georgia's Future"



# OVERVIEW

**Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE)** plays a critical role in supporting economic development in the state of Georgia by addressing the top site selection factor—a **skilled workforce**. CTAE also helps prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to succeed in a rapidly changing economy. Georgia's CTAE programs prepare students for all types of careers and involve many pathways after graduation, including directly to the workforce, starting their own business, joining the military, or enrolling in various postsecondary education programs. The Career Forward Georgia strategic plan outlines action items for the Georgia Department of Education, local school districts, and partners to advance CTAE over the coming five years. Ultimately, the successful implementation of this new strategic plan will ensure that Georgia remains the top state for K-12–based workforce development.

## PROCESS

The Career Forward 2024–2028 strategic plan builds on the success of the last strategic plan. The planning process takes stock of current needs and charts a measurable and attainable plan for advancing CTAE in Georgia. Stuart Countess, president and CEO of KIA Georgia, and Joseph Lillyblad, education and workforce development manager at Georgia Power, served as the committee leads.

**20+**

listening sessions  
and key stakeholder  
interviews

**3**

strategic planning  
committee workshops

**50+**

business, education,  
community, and  
government leaders on  
the steering committee



## MISSION

To provide Georgia students with high-quality educational programs, career pathways, and experiences that prepare them for workplace success.

## VISION

Preparing all students for life.

## VALUES



### Student Centered

Students are the center of what we do in CTAE. We must always take a student-centered approach in our decisions, strategies, and investments.



### Career Focused

All CTAE programs will be designed to teach students relevant job skills that align to current and emerging career opportunities in the local, regional, or state economy.



### Employer Driven

To accomplish its goal of preparing students for the workforce, CTAE must continually align itself with the current and emerging workforce and skill needs expressed by employers. CTAE and employers must work hand-in-hand.



### Innovative

CTAE must continue to innovate and deliver cutting-edge programs and services. Our structures and processes must be flexible enough to allow programs to be responsive to students' needs and industry expectations.







## PRIORITY AREA 1

# Prioritize Skill and Industry Alignment at the State and Local Level

A key focus of Georgia CTAE programs is to prepare students for careers and success in their local economies. Skill and industry alignment is essential to achieving this goal. Our CTAE courses and pathways should coordinate with local employer workforce needs and skillsets. Additionally, our educational offerings—from K-12 to postsecondary—should strengthen career pipelines via partnerships and transferrable credentials. Overall, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) will work to ensure continued alignment with the Technical College System of Georgia, University System of Georgia, and the state's diverse economy. Additionally, CTAE will continue to use the Economic Development Partnership (EDP) program to help accomplish this goal.

### ACTION ITEMS

To prioritize skill and industry alignment at the state and local levels, the Georgia Department of Education CTAE, local school districts, and partners will undertake action items relevant to each group.

#### Georgia Department of Education CTAE will:

##### **Promote effective advisory boards.**

The state will highlight local advisory boards that engage with a variety of community stakeholders, industry partners, associations, and post-secondary institutions. The state will promote advisory board trainings and share best practices.

##### **Conduct a holistic review of credentials in partnership with the Georgia Chamber of Commerce.**

The state CTAE department will partner with the Georgia Chamber to evaluate and revise credentials. This partnership will also create a statewide and regional high-demand field list for GaDOE, postsecondary institutions, and local districts to use in educational program planning.

##### **Update the Georgia Alignment Toolkit.**

The state will update its Georgia Alignment Toolkit. This is a document that provides guidance and case studies on effectively coordinating education with local workforce needs. It also provides information on use of regional data to help inform alignment decisions.

##### **Develop resources for earlier career exposure activities.**

To promote both student and local workforce success, students need to be exposed to a variety of careers and guidance on their career aptitudes and interests. The state plans to increase career awareness programming in earlier education and to improve frameworks for sharing career information.

#### Local School Districts will:

##### **Share programs of study/CTAE information with businesses.**

Local school districts will work to maintain an open dialogue with businesses and industry professionals about current CTAE offerings. Programs of study may be revised based on this dialogue to improve the quality of offerings to students and to strengthen the workforce pipeline.

##### **Maintain active advisory committees.**

Local districts will host regular advisory committee meetings and ensure members include a variety of community stakeholders invested in skill and industry alignment. The advisory committees will provide guidance to enhance program quality and ensure the transferability of coursework and credentials to employer needs.

##### **Designate and train a district-wide workforce development point of contact**

Local districts will work towards appointing a district-wide workforce development professional. This position will be a consistent resource for CTAE professionals on local workforce development efforts.

##### **Work toward the Economic Development Partnership designation.**

The EDP program helps districts better connect with economic development professionals and employers in their community. GaDOE and partners provide resources and technical assistance to districts working toward the designation. School districts that demonstrate successful mastery of the EDP key elements are eligible for recognition.

#### Partners will:

##### **Bolster and expand local partnerships.**

Community partners from a variety of backgrounds, including higher education, key industries, and associations, will increase active engagement with state and local CTAE representatives on alignment efforts. Partners will expand opportunities for skillset expansion for students and CTAE professionals. Partners will also help their local school districts earn and maintain their EDP designation status.

##### **Increase communication about current and future workforce needs at the state, regional, and local levels.**

Partners will prioritize two-way conversations with stakeholders on alignment efforts. Partners will engage in more dialogue around for current and future workforce needs.

## PRIORITY 1 MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Measure	Baseline	FY 2024 Goal
# of End of Pathway Assessments Reviewed with Industry Leaders to Ensure Alignment	**	10
# of Districts Earning the Economic Development Partnership Designation	15	20
# of CTAE Educator Externships Completed During the Preceding 12 Months	*	400
# of Active CTAE Articulation Agreements	17	21
# of Students Enrolled in Work-Based Learning	25,207	25,500

\*This is an emerging measure of success. The Georgia Department of Education will work during FY 2024 to collect this information.

\*\*This is a new process, so no baseline data are available.





## PRIORITY AREA 2

# Ensure High-Quality Career Development Support for All CTAE Students

The main focus of CTAE in Georgia is to prepare students for entering the workforce and being successful in a career. Students not only need employability skills, but also a deep understanding of potential career paths and the technical skills required to thrive in their chosen career field. Career development happens in many places, including CTAE and academic courses, through work with school counselors, and through Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs).

## ACTION ITEMS

To ensure high-quality career development for all CTAE students, the Georgia Department of Education CTAE, local schools districts, and other partners will undertake action items relevant to each group.

### Georgia Department of Education CTAE will:

#### Focus on teacher and counselor development.

The Georgia Department of Education will create and offer additional professional learning options for teachers and counselors centered on career development. In particular, GaDOE will develop a new endorsement program for school counselors to enhance their knowledge of career pathways and provide them with additional resources and training on best practices to assist students with making career decisions.

#### Expand YouScience utilization for career development.

YouScience is a valuable tool for increasing career exposure for students, but often the information is underutilized. To enhance utilization, GaDOE, in conjunction with employer and community partners, will develop a playbook outlining best practices and steps to help students understand their results.

#### Implement and evaluate a pilot program for dedicated career counselors.

To make career counseling as valuable as possible, GaDOE will implement and evaluate a pilot program that places dedicated career coaches in high schools. Having a program that focuses solely on career exposure and mentoring, YouScience guidance, career research, and related areas will allow students to have a go-to person for all things related to career exploration and planning.

#### Expand career exploration in early grades.

GaDOE will assist in increasing career exploration opportunities in middle school and elementary school. Starting career exposure earlier will allow students to experience and understand more career options by the time they are making CTAE pathway choices and career decisions.

### Local School Districts will:

#### Develop a district-specific and clearly articulated workforce development plan.

Whether internal within the school or created with external partners, the workforce development plan will lay out the roles different partners will play in helping that district work toward a common goal. Utilizing outside partners, like a workforce board or development authority, increases collaboration and strengthens partnerships for more meaningful career development opportunities. The workforce development plan should be fully integrated with the district's Perkins V comprehensive local needs assessment.

#### Utilize YouScience in an intentional way.

YouScience requires the participation of many partners, including teachers, counselors, administrators, and business partners. School districts will focus on supporting and promoting the assessment, equipping parents and guardians to use the results with their students, and using the data to guide students' pathway and work-based learning placements with area businesses.

#### Provide Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) intra-curricular opportunities in all CTAE program areas.

Participation in CTSOs enhance student learning through leadership and personal development, applied learning and real-world application. CTSOs are committed to the growth of students in all CTAE career pathways. These organizations provide leadership training and career development opportunities for students enrolled in CTAE programs in middle and high schools and enhance their occupational and employability skills through various activities such as conferences, award programs, service projects, and competitive events at the local, state and national levels.

### Partners will:

#### Increase collaboration around career exposure.

Business partners will increase their visibility in the CTAE programs, showing support by giving guest lectures, hosting student and parent tours, mentoring YouScience matches, and more. Hearing directly from industry professionals presents valuable opportunities for students to ask questions and get a deeper understanding of what career fields look like for young professionals.

#### Collect insight on current and future needs from industry.

Business partners are the most direct link to understanding current and anticipated skill needs. Creating a regular line of communication between businesses and CTAE programs around workforce needs, relevant curricula, and technical skill needs will allow for better alignment of the programs to industry needs and career expectations of students.

#### Support Funding for the Career Coaches Program

Business and industry partners will support funding for the development of a career coaching pilot program in selected high schools. The coaches should be school-system employees fully integrated into the career development system. Funding may be a mixture of state appropriations and financial support provided directly by businesses, associations, and philanthropic organizations.



## PRIORITY 2 MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Measure	Baseline	FY 2024 Goal
% of Counselors Completing their Career-Ready Endorsement	**	**
% of High School Students Completing a YouScience Assessment	47.12% (FY2021)	49%
Number of Georgia CTSO Competition National Winners (1st, 2nd or 3rd places)	162	170
College and Career Readiness Indicator on the State's Accountability System	56.84% (FY2019)	57%
# of School Districts with a Workforce Development Plan	*	***
% of students enrolled in post-secondary education, employed, or in military service two quarters after graduation	96%	96.25%

\*This is an emerging measure of success. The Georgia Department of Education will work during FY 2024 to collect this information.

\*\*This new program will be developed and launched in FY2024.

\*\*\*This is a new program will be developed and launched in FY2025.





### PRIORITY AREA 3

# Enhance Recruitment and Retention Efforts for the CTAE Workforce

The quality and effectiveness of CTAE programs in Georgia depends on a qualified and passionate CTAE workforce. It is imperative that we commit to continued recruitment of teachers, counselors, and CTAE administrators. We also aim to bolster retention by increasing professional development opportunities and resources for educators and staff. By growing and supporting our CTAE staff, we can improve program experiences for our students.

## ACTION ITEMS

To enhance recruitment and retentions efforts for CTAE workforce the Georgia Department of Education CTAE, local schools districts, and partners will undertake action items relevant to each group.



### Georgia Department of Education CTAE will:

#### **Provide regular professional development and networking opportunities.**

GaDOE plans to expand and promote professional development opportunities around the state, both in-person and virtual courses. The state will also help organize and streamline processes for formal externships. The CTAE Resource Network (CTAERN) will explore an online platform for delivering asynchronous, virtual learning opportunities.

#### **Increase awareness about the importance of the CTAE workforce.**

GaDOE will increase recognition opportunities to help promote the value of the CTAE workforce and their accomplishments. The state will also promote the importance of the CTAE workforce with community stakeholders, such as industry professionals and local and regional associations.

#### **Create a framework and resource guide for districts to utilize with the CTAE workforce.**

It is important that Georgia's CTAE workforce, regardless of district, can access information and opportunities in a centralized format. The state CTAE department will better organize and promote relevant resource guides. Additionally, GaDOE will formalize a CTAE director mentorship program for use around the state.

#### **Educate school systems about flexibility and waivers.**

School systems in Georgia have many tools for hiring and retaining staff and faculty through the school system flexibility process. GaDOE will provide training and resources on how districts have used flexibility to recruit and retain the CTAE workforce.

#### **Utilize Education as a Profession (EAP) and career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) to build a pipeline for CTAE talent.**

Our students are great assets not only to the broader Georgia workforce but also in our schools. GaDOE will increase promotion of CTAE careers within our existing pathways and student organizations, such as EAP and CTSOs.



### Local School Districts will:

#### **Use waivers strategically and effectively.**

Districts will explore how to utilize existing flexibility and waivers to proactively recruit and retain the CTAE workforce. GaDOE will provide professional development and resources to help districts fully utilize their flexibility and waivers.

#### **Enhance recognition and the culture related to CTAE.**

In addition to increased recognition opportunities at the statewide level, local districts will also increase recognition of CTAE educators, counselors, and administrators and CTAE best practices. Local districts will strengthen marketing efforts to improve perceptions of CTAE offerings.

#### **Enhance mentoring programs for new teachers, counselors, and CTAE staff.**

Local districts will help set the CTAE workforce up for success by building support networks and trainings for new teachers and counselors. When possible, local districts will also point new staff to resource information hubs.



### Partners will:

#### **Invest in state and district programs geared toward recruitment and retention.**

As the state and school districts implement programs to recruit and retain the CTAE workforce, partners will invest financially to help maintain these programs. Additionally, partners will be involved in experiential opportunities that enhance CTAE programs and the CTAE workforce experience.

#### **Invest in connecting industry experts to education.**

Recruiting and retaining CTAE teachers, especially for roles that are in high demand in the state economy, is financially challenging. Employers can partner with their local school systems to provide financial or in-kind support to ensure a qualified instructor is present in programs linked to their workforce needs.



## PRIORITY 3 MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Measure	Baseline	FY 2024 Goal
# of New Teachers Participating in New Teacher Induction Program	289	300
# of Teachers Enrolled in CTAE Preparation Programs	*	*
Teacher and Counselor Retention Rate	*	*

\*This is an emerging measure of success. The Georgia Department of Education will work during FY 2024 to collect this information.







#### PRIORITY AREA 4

## Expand Marketing and Promotion Efforts to Enhance Stakeholders' Awareness and Perceptions of CTAE in Georgia

CTAE is most valuable when all stakeholders across the state are aware of the programs and benefits. Ensuring that students, parents, business representatives, and leaders not only know what CTAE is but truly understand the benefits and share the positive message is key to the long-term success for CTAE

### ACTION ITEMS

To expand marketing and promotion efforts, the Georgia Department of Education CTAE, local school districts, and partners will undertake action items relevant to each group.



#### Georgia Department of Education CTAE will:

##### Develop an outreach campaign to underscore how CTAE helps to meet the state's workforce needs.

CTAE is integral to filling Georgia's growing workforce needs, whether by offering credentials and a connection to go straight into the workforce or setting them up for success in postsecondary education and training programs. The state CTAE department will develop targeted messages, alumni testimonials, and campaigns to better market and share information about these benefits and the central role CTAE plays in the workforce development ecosystem in Georgia.

##### Create a CTAE brand toolkit for state and local implementation.

GaDOE will create a CTAE brand toolkit with easy-to-use templates, logos, taglines, key messages, and more to help local districts tell their story. This toolkit will also include training and professional development on how to strategically implement the brand toolkit alongside community partners.

##### Educate key influencers.

Many individuals, both those internal to the education sector and external stakeholders, need additional information about CTAE in Georgia. Through targeted education and outreach, GaDOE will ensure that important groups like superintendents (Georgia School Board Association), economic developers (Georgia Economic Developers Association), and industry associations are knowledgeable about CTAE and its role as a key to statewide and local success.



#### Local School Districts will:

##### Implement the CTAE brand toolkit and messaging.

Once GaDOE CTAE has developed a brand toolkit and key messages, local school districts will work to adopt them and share localized versions with key community stakeholders. The more districts that share the same message about CTAE and use the same branding, the more recognizable the brand will become across the state.

##### Engage family/guardians around career opportunities after graduation.

For many students, their parents or guardians play a major role in their postgraduation decisions. Local school districts should work to engage these influential people so that they have a better understanding of local opportunities for students to go straight into the workforce or pursue technical education/training. These efforts can help break the stereotype that "every student should go to college" by educating adults about the meaningful careers that exist in their region and the state.

##### Train CTAE teachers and staff on being CTAE advocates.

Local districts will help train the CTAE workforce on communication and storytelling. This will enhance alignment by improving communication between stakeholders. Stronger communication will allow for more sharing of opportunities and best practices, while also enhancing goal setting and tracking.



#### Partners will:

##### Advocate for CTAE within their networks.

Business, industry, and community partners will share positive experiences and messages with others in their organization, industry, and community. Companies not already plugged into local school systems may not be hearing about local CTAE programs and other relevant initiatives. Learning about these programs from other businesses or people they trust can be a great way to grow the CTAE network.

##### Actively engage with schools on workforce development.

A company can engage with a local high school on workforce development in many ways, including through work-based learning, guest lectures, advisory committees, their comprehensive local needs assessment (part of the Perkins V federal funding requirements), and more. It is important that local businesses tap into one or more of the existing means of connecting with their local workforce pipeline.

##### Work together regionally on career exposure events.

Many regions of the state are home to key industries that make up a significant percentage of the employment and economy, yet local educators and students may not be aware of them. Working together to create opportunities such as teacher externships, student tours, or other exposure events can remove the burden from a single employer while providing more insight to students, teachers, and counselors.

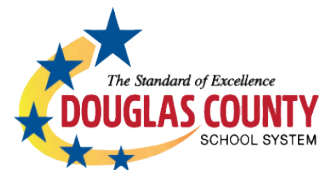
PRIORITY 4 MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Measure	Baseline	FY 2024 Goal
# of GaDOE CTAE Social Media Followers	4,674	5,000
# of Districts Adopting the CTAE Delivers Brand Toolkit	*	**
# of New CTAE Georgia Newsletter Subscribers	*	500
% of High School Students Enrolled in CTAE	69%	71%

\* New programs, so no baseline data are available.  
\*\*The brand toolkit will be developed in FY 2024 and launched in FY 2025.



Thank you to all of the partners that contributed to this strategic plan.  
Many organizations were involved in the development process including:







# CAREER FORWARD GEORGIA

A PLAN FOR ADVANCING CAREER, TECHNICAL, AND  
AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN GEORGIA

FY2024 – FY2028 | August 2023



Carl Vinson  
Institute of Government  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

*It is the policy of the Georgia Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, disability, citizenship, gender, pregnancy, childbirth or other related conditions, national origin, religion, military or veteran status, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information or age.*